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-TIDE
MURS

F. H. DE QUINCEY

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SONG-TIDE MURMURS

SONG-TIDE MURMURS

BY

F. H. DE QUINCEY

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

1903

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The Island of Blisses

Of that city we know as "Hope,"

Where the brightest schemes are plann'd,
The gates I had dared to ope

With a trembling heart and hand ;
And mine was a wizard's pow'r

When I stood in its walks of bloom,
For I robed in beauty each passing hour
And sealed the mouth of the tomb !

But I little dream'd there would come a day
When my pow'r and its splendour would
pass away !

But Hope had a sister isle,

And "Love" was the name it bore,
And I lived but in Hope awhile
When I sighed for Love's sunny shore ;

THE ISLAND OF BLISSES

I smiled at the reef that lay
 'Neath the tides that laved it round,
And I ventured forth on a fatal day
 For this Island of Blisses bound ;
 But I little dreamed or thought me how
 I should curse that isle as I curse it now !

I looked on that island's queen,
 And I bow'd me at her feet ;
But alas ! that beauty's mien
 Can mantle a soul's deceit !
She spoke to her slaves apart—
 To Coldness, Doubt, and Pride,
And they pierc'd me, each with a poison'd dart,
 Till my heart fell down and died !
 And now it lies in its shroud of gloom
 'Neath the Island of Blisses, its goal and
 tomb !

A Passing Form

In the busy street she passed me by—
Passed like some resplendent thing
That glances by on nervous wing
Beneath an Oriental sky !

Like him who sudden sunshine hails,
I saw her come ; I saw her go
Like those who, motionless with woe,
Gaze after disappearing sails !

I saw her vanish from my sight,
And then—ah ! then I knew no more,
For Reason's barque did drift from shore,
And wander far in seas of night !

A PASSING FORM

But from her beauty's chalice, I
In our brief meeting quaff'd too deep;
Sweet poison 'twas! but no death sleep
In meet compassion drew anigh!

And whence she came—whereto she went—
I cannot tell—I do not know;
She passed, like sunshine from the snow,
And left a chill she never meant!

Yet morn and noon and night, my soul
Hies thro' that crowd's intricacies,
With love, alas! that will not cease
And hope that never nears its goal!

Time

**SUPREME Instructor of the Human Race !
Relentless Executioner of Fate !
Vast Sourceless Tide ! Unfathomable Sea !
Whose waves, the years, flow on so stealthily
We scarce know that they touch us or abate
Our force and strength and boasted hardness—we,
Poor sin-slimed pebbles ! ground till scarce a trace
Is left to tell what we have been so late !**

**Thou Caterer for Death and cold decay !
Iconoclast and Fellest Ravisher !
Where is there beauty, promise, hope, or trust,
Falls not a victim to thy ruthless lust ?**

TIME

Whose is the prayer can soften thee, or stay
The sure fulfilment of thy will severe,
When thou hast raised thy notchèd scythe to
slay—
Thy scythe which ne'er hath known the tooth
of rust?

Self-woven Vesture of Eternity!
Great Moth, for ever hovering round the sun,
And making night by spreading of thy wings,—
Great Death's-head Moth, whose tireless flutterings
Have filled his beams with dust of ravage done
On nameless sensate and insensate things;
Womb of the buried Past and dim To-be!
Save thee, O Time! earth holds no conqueror—
none!

A Reminiscence

O'ER the gently waving meadows
Softly fall the ghostly shadows,
For the tender Moon, like lady fair in nuptial
 robe array'd,
Glancing at her features glowing,
In the lakes and streamlets flowing,
Silver gifts of love is throwing
 Over wood and forest-glade—
O'er the pine-plum'd slopes and winding paths
 of wood and forest glade
Sleeping in the twilight shade !

In a spirit harmonising
With a scene so tranquilising

A REMINISCENCE

O'er the mountain paths I wander with a maiden
by my side,
And this maiden far outshining
All things else of heaven's designing,
With a wreath of beauty's twining
Has my heart in fetters tied,—
And my happy hopeful heart, in love's soft-silken
fetters tied,
Swells with love's ecstatic pride!

Bending o'er her golden tresses
I unveil my love's recesses:
“Yours my heart is—yours for ever. Say, oh
say, that you'll be mine!”
And the tender soft compression
Of her hand is such confession
That my rapture's quick accession
Thrills my veins like perfum'd wine—

A REMINISCENCE

Scatters all my hovering doubts, and thrills my
veins like perfum'd wine,
As she vouchsafes me this sign !

In the Spring-time, when the flowers
Weave their spells among the bowers,
And the newly-thronèd sun-god flings his mantle
on the green,
When the birds are blithely singing
And the daisies brightly springing,
Summoned by the church bells ringing,
I shall claim her as my queen—
I shall claim this beauteous maiden for my heart's
elected queen,
Till death's shadow intervene !

But alas ! that Hope must borrow
From the usurer, To-morrow ;

A REMINISCENCE

And alas ! that Death and Sorrow their appointed
tasks fulfil, !

For the only flower I cherish'd,
By whose grace my love was nourished,
Dropp'd its tender leaves and perish'd
When the snow fell on the hill—

When the snow, like heaven's messenger, de-
scended on the hill
To proclaim its Master's will !

From the Depths

SMILE sweetly on me as before,

My friends have all forsa'en my side,
Like Dead Sea fruit, their friendship's core

All sweetness to my heart denied ;
They left me without sigh or moan,
Oh ! wilt thou leave me too—alone ?

Smile sweetly on me as before ;

Oh ! let me in the future years,
When youth's delusive dream is o'er,
Embalm this memory in my tears,
If still from joy or grief they flow,
That thou wert true when few were so !

FROM THE DEPTHS

Smile sweetly on me as before ;

 The icy streams around my soul,
Which cold despair has frozen o'er,
 Dissolved beneath that smile, shall roll,
And from the dust of worldly strife
I'll cleanse these passing hours of life !

Smile sweetly on me as before ;

 Like captive who has miss'd the ray
That steals across his dungeon floor,
 I cannot now tell night from day ;
I only know that all is changed,
And love and bliss and peace estranged !

Smile sweetly on me as before,

 My heart is sad and cold and drear,
The hopes that warm'd its depths of yore
 Seem death-lights on Ambition's bier,

FROM THE DEPTHS

And gloating mockery grins between
The present and the might-have-been !

Smile sweetly on me as before ;

E'en Faith and Strength, with plumes a-droop,
Like soddened weeds on Charon's oar,

Draw from life's fray their frightened troop,
And humbled Courage turns aside
From deeds that late were dared with pride !

Smile sweetly on me as before ;

Like earth beneath some dire eclipse,
Dread shadows fall on sea and shore,

And all sweet sounds have sealed their lips ;
For since thy smile hath been withdrawn,
Mine eyes have ne'er beheld the dawn !

The Doom of the God-Inspired

"Therefore, behold, I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes : and some of them you will put to death and crucify : and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city."—ST. MATT. xxiii., 34.

Out of the way, thou God-Inspired

Prophet or poet—whiche'er thou art,

The time is past when the world requir'd

Thy star-like eye and thy great flame-heart !

Or stay and share of its bounty, thou,

And bare thy soul for its scoffs and scorns,

For never so sure was thy wage as now,—

Thy wage—the Cross and the Crown of thorns !

Out of the way thou God-Inspired !

What dost thou here 'mid the busy throng ?

THE DOOM OF THE GOD-INSPIRED

The fool in his cap and bells is hired
And holds our ear with his jest and song,
But thou!—it were best that thou retire;
Here is no mart for thy thought-blooms—no!
Go! vend some good for a base desire—
Thine own, at least, were made surer so!

Out of the way! Thy fierce crusade
Is waged in vain;—what we do, we do;
Our partnership in the devil's trade
Is one that ever gives *SELF* its due!
To something safer our wisdom clings
Than aught that lives in thy simple creed;
We seek to soar not upon the wings
That rise a span above lust and greed!

Out of the way! What seek'st thou here—
Here where men barter their souls for gain?

THE DOOM OF THE GOD-INSPIRED

No part in such traffic thou choosest to bear—

Thy brother's glory is thy disdain !

Go, feed on thy hopes of renown to come,

For dreaming fools it is fare enow—

Some pity we've left for the blind and dumb,

But none for thee with the thought-scarr'd
brow !

The impress of our vaunted God

Is blotted from social life, to-day,

And men with their hooves in hell's-fire shod

Ride o'er the brother that bars their way !

Success with the wiles of fraud we woo,

And dream of blessings gold-bought and priced ;

In Court and Temple our gods are new

And Justice sneers at the Word of Christ !

Our knees we stiffen with godless pride,

By love unfetter'd we think and act ;

THE DOOM OF THE GOD-INSPIRED

Our father's idols we thrust aside

● And worship only the venal fact !

And thus unalter'd we hear you threat

Of the vengeance, time, for our usage, brings.

And all in vain will your heart's red sweat

And your tear-drops fall on your sad harp-strings !

The lesson of life you scorned to heed—

The lesson it taught to your fated sires ;

You knew, moreover, their labour's meed—

Their broken hearts and their crush'd desires !

And yet thou test'st its bounty, thou !

Then bare thy soul for its scoffs and scorns

For never so sure was thy wage as now,—

Thy wage—the Cross and the Crown of thorns !

The Sunbeam and the Lily

A TALL and graceful Lily grew

From the marge of a limpid stream,
And, tho' 'twas fed by the morning's dew,
It pined away in its sisters' view,
And never a one of them dreamed or knew
It was loved by a bright Sunbeam !

But, day by day, the Sunbeam bright

Came down from the skies above ;
It kissed the brow of the Lily white
And braided its robe with golden light ;
But, at length, the Lily guess'd the blight
That lurk'd in the Sunbeam's love !

THE SUNBEAM AND THE LILY

For there are things that may not mate

Without or sorrow or ill ;

But this is wisdom learnt too late :—

The Sunbeam laughed in the teeth of Fate ;

“Oh love,” it cried,—“it is not like hate,

’Tis never love’s doom to kill.”

But the Lily to the Sunbeam said,

As she breath’d life’s parting breath,

“Ah ! the love that’s only passion-fed

Is ever a thing of fear and dread,

Its loss is to have conquerèd,

For it aye weds shame and death.”

Rain (Early Summer)

THE rain comes down, the great big-hearted
rain,

And, as it drinks thro' every pore, the earth
Beams like an infant, when a cherub mirth
Springs Aphrodite-like from out its tears,
And turns to radiant smiles the frown it wears,
As tho' in pity for its fancied pain !

The rain comes down—the round sun-glist'rd
rain !

Oh ! how it patters on the parchèd ground !
And what divinest harmony its sound
To weary watching husbandmen, whose eyes
Dilate in gladness as they view the skies
And dream of teeming barns and golden grain !

RAIN (EARLY SUMMER)

The rain comes down—the leaping, prancing
rain !

And as the facile touch from ivory keys
Uprouseth feeling from its tranced ease,
So springs each drowsy perfume from its nest,
And interfusing, each one with the rest,
Exults and glories in this mutual gain !

The rain comes down—the liquid-tinkling rain,
And Plenty looks about her for her horn,
Whereon sat Hope, with broken wings, at morn,
And never dreamed to find a home so soon,
O'erflowed with all the promis'd wealth of June,
And sister months that follow in her train !

The rain comes down—the life-renewing rain !
And every separate drop some flower seeks,
Like lovers true that have not met for weeks ;

RAIN (EARLY SUMMER)

And, on her new-embellish'd couch of leaves,
The rose revives, and momentarily retrieves
The bloom that late had wither'd from her pain !

The rain comes down—the varnish of the skies
That o'er the living landscape God has spread,
And there is breath again in what seemed dead,
For manifold unseen activities
Are stimulated by the dewy breeze,
Which now in its first flight its pinions tries !

The rain comes down: mad are the swollen
 brooks

With joy almost articulate, and bound
And leap, as in their strength new-found
They wildly strive to burst their prisoning grooves
And carve them newer, with their liquid hooves,
Among the level plains and grassy nooks !

To E—. G—.

ENAMOURED of thyself—Narcissus-like,
Look in the mirror of thy vanity;
Seek approbation there for all the wrong
Inflicted by thy mean insidious spite ;
Exalt thyself in thy perverted thought,
Greet every foul suspicion with delight,
Reap all that thy ingratitude has sown,
And justify thyself to thine own deeds :—
No wrong but finds its punishment betimes—
Thy mirror shall be shattered in due course !

Clamor Artis

SEND us a critic, if only one,
You years that pass us by,
That the work by the Muses' vot'ries done
May be seen as in truth's own eye;
T' expound the symbols of human wit
Let one Daniel, at least, be found,
That the "*veritas prævalebit*"
May be more than an empty sound!

The living worker is sunderèd
From his hope of worldly gain,
And the manes of the nameless dead
Cry out for their wreaths in vain,

CLAMOR ARTIS

For still the glass of the goddess Truth
Is dimm'd by the breath of fools,
And Error gloats in a deathless youth
Despite Thought's contending schools !

Neglected Merit's voice of woe
Is wafted along the years,
For few must reap where many sow,
And they must reap in tears ;
And eyes will turn that have no sight
Unto the loveliest star ;
But they will never perceive its light
Because they are—*what they are.*

The cry of conquering Ignorance
Resounds thro' the fanes of Art,
And Quack'ry, crown'd by blindfold Chance,
Is playing the victor's part,

CLAMOR ARTIS

Whilst Genius, plunged in its lowly cell,
Is dying of hope deferred ;
Yet we wait to dissolve the baleful spell
For the critic's wisdom-word !

'Tis not the least of the world's wrong
That it misconfers its fame,
And sets a daub or a worthless song
In a dazzling glory-frame.
But true is false and false is true
As they win men's blame or praise,
And poets' tears are the only dew
On the Muses' flowery ways !

Send us a critic whose word shall be
As a light upon our way,
For we lack of ourselves the power to see,
And our feet are prone to stray.

CLAMOR ARTIS

**And only wise in our own conceit,
The creed that we hold so dear
May show us only in its defeat
The truth as it should appear !**

A Midnight Ramble

ALONE, thro' the deserted streets I walk,
At this dread hour of Midnight's solemn reign,
Black dismal shadows in my pathway stalk,
A weird fantastic funereal train,
Like evil spirits come to earth again ;
And, in the measured rhythm of my feet,
Which echo renders back in sharp refrain,
They seem some mystic protest to repeat
'Gainst my intruding steps within their lone
retreat !

I know not wherefore I have wander'd out
Into the darkness of the brooding night
When ghostly spectres join in reel and rout,
And gloom and terror revel in their might ;

A MIDNIGHT RAMBLE

My soul, it may be, would enforce its right
Of converse with the spirit of the hour,
For I have still the art to draw delight
From earth's quiescence and can feel the power
Of silence when it broods on ruined shrine and
tower!

Awhile I pause before these frowzy walls
Where Want's gaunt victims hide them from
the blast

And Sin, in many an ugly shape, appals,
When once the searching glare of day is past;—
A narrow pile forsooth; but ah! how vast
If measured by the woes they circumscribe,
For their lean habitants can scarce be class'd
With God's fair-featured hope-inspired tribe,
Who Misery keep aloof with Mammon's golden
bribe!

A MIDNIGHT RAMBLE

Here blood-smirch'd Tragedy runs nightly thro'
Her fearful *répertoire*: all the hosts of Sin;—
Revenge with gnashing teeth and blinded view
And ever over-eager to begin
Her task, and Murder, hell's first born twin
And favourite child,—Hate, Jealousy, and
Shame—

With all the nameless brood they claim as
kin—

The Night's enforced attention proudly claim:
Oh! what a play it is! Its horrors who shall
name?

And sharp wild notes fall on my listening ear,
With such deep suffering burthen'd, I can tell
A heart is bursting o'er the funeral bier
Of some departed spirit loved too well;
Till my o'erpowerèd bosom 'gins to swell

A MIDNIGHT RAMBLE

With its salt tide of sympathetic grief ;—
But ah ! how sad it is when one would quell
His kindred's pain or yield it some relief
To feel Man's but the vassal, Circumstance the
chief !

Full soon the horror of that death-gloom'd spot
Lies far behind me ; but where have I stray'd ?
Are those not festive sounds mine ear hath
caught ?

Hath Riot here his mindless dupes array'd
Reflections maddening goadings to evade ?
And wherefore is it that I now descry
Gyrating shadows on the ground display'd
As bright the light gleams from the casement
high,
Where crystal lustres flame, like stars within
the sky !

A MIDNIGHT RAMBLE

But soft ! the sweet entrancing strain is still'd,
And I have drawn more closely yet, to see
Why Night's sepulchral silence hath been thrill'd
By such unwonted sounds of revelry.
And now, I hear the glasses chink, and free
Full voices cry the nuptial toast aloud,—
But oh ! in what suggestive enmity
To that wild wail of grief, where Death's black
cloud

Its sorrows shed—" *Long live the bride and Bride-
groom proud !* "

But carried onward by the deep dark tide,
'Tis soon inwove in its hoarse chaunt of woes,
Which tells of many—some the heirs of pride,
And many more, the world-opprest, who rose
Rebellious 'gainst Life's wrong, and sought repose
Beneath its waves : too oft the lids of Night

A MIDNIGHT RAMBLE

In startled horror from their dreams uncloset—
E'en now Despair's wild shriek its slumbers fright,
And now—there's one the less to curse Life's
ruthless spite !

Thy mercy God ! before thy throne thus fled
What hope have such their bleeding hearts to heal ?
Oh ! fond precipitance ! Yet those so wed
To sorrow in this life must sure appeal
Not vainly to thy mercy, who dost feel
For even Frailty's most transgressing brood ;
Thy love—*Thy* sympathy is only real,
And all of Earth a mockery : man's blood
Manures the soil of sin, but kills the germ of
good !

But lo ! the Night is speeding from the sky
And leaves the grey fringe of her floating dress

A MIDNIGHT RAMBLE

To trim the Morn's, who, timid, pale and shy,
And marr'd with dewy tear-drops of distress,
Looks on the world's inhab'ted wilderness:—
Sweet tender Morn! bride of the golden Day!
Whose modest maidhood shrinks from his caress,
With joy I hail thee,—'neath thy gentle sway
Sin hides its shamèd head and creeps abashed
away!

Appeal to the Fleeting Night

LIFT not thy mantle from the world below,
Rouse not the tumult of the toiling throng,—
That ceaseless chorus of distress and woe,
That universal wail of saddest song
Whose echoes sleep the aerial halls along !
O Night ! benign and gentle, wherefore fly
So swift away ? Why suffer Shame and Wrong
So soon again their godless trade to ply
And flaunt their obscene ensigns e'en beneath
thine eye !

Rouse not the slave of battle's stern decree—
The dreaming warrior from his starlit bed ;

Dawn

(SUMMER)

AURORA, Mistress of the radiant Day
By whose soft dalliance she hath been delayed,
Her purple hangings tears in haste away
From her soft couch, as tho' she'd overstay'd
Her'lotted space, and Time's debt must be paid ;—
And now she quits her lover's warm embrace
And earthward hies in pearly dew's array'd,
And, at her advent, shrinking into space,
Each lingering lovely star doth shyly hide its
face !

As oft, in human pageants, o'er the throng
Expectancy her stifling wrappage throws,
Ere the awaited cynosure, with strong
Array of potent splendour-spells, bestows

DAWN

Its ling'ring wonders on the eager gaze,
So Nature, hushed, awaits till Day unclose
Its burning eyes, save where prelusive lays
Of some too-eager bird are premature with praise !

Am I in wonderland ? No, no ! and yes ;
For is not this God's studio—this the flush
Of Dawn ? This living laughing loveliness—
This light and bloom ;—is it not of His brush
The proudest masterpiece ? and this wild gush
Of leaping panting feeling which o'erawes
The heart of speech, with its volcanic rush—
Are these not Wonder's offspring ?—this their
cause

Of birth, this scene ? my silence its applause ?

O ! what a Laocöon-like glory, this ;
How gasps the writhing spirit in the glare

DAWN

Of this bright beauty-serpent in whose hiss
Lie all the harmonies, undream'd—untold,
That from the heart of Nature ever roll'd,
To vibrate between higher worlds than this :
Here, miser, look on this cloud-wreathèd gold,
Thy present worship is a Judas' kiss ;—
To look as I look now, for thee were least
amiss !

Great, kindly-hearted Midas—Alchemist
And Wizard unsurpassable, whose eye
With gracious fire-glance, as the Morn kiss'd
Its farewell to the Night, and breath'd its sigh
In dewy vapours, bade them draw anigh
Thy throne, and gave them beauteous shapes
and wings .
And full consent with volant wings to fly

DAWN

And propagate the myriad lovely things
That from their union blest so bountifully
springs !

Now, slowly sprinkled o'er each mountain's crest,
The light-shafts fall, as tho' in reverence meet,
Those stony Titans did their heads divest
Of their black helmets, and were quick to greet
The True Beneficence, at whose proud feet
The poems of the heart have aye been sung ;
And lingering shadows, scared from their retreat,
Dissolve themselves the floating mists among,
As loth to mar a scene o'er which such spells are
flung !

Lo ! how the trembling babbling streams, with
hoard

Of light and gold and jewels, from each hill
And mount rush down, and spread upon the sward

DAWN

Their flashing treasures,—e'en as children will,
At festive seasons, when their elders fill
Their cuddling arms with gifts all love-bestowed;
And birds, song-swollen, can coerce their will
No longer, but beneath the painless goad
Of beauty too much felt, their little hearts un-
load!

O, splendour! Glory! Majesty! Delight!
And Melody most ravishingly wed,
How wondrous art thou! climbing up the flight
Of Eastern cloud-stairs, perfume-bathed and led
By kingly train of dew-wash'd hours, in red
Imperial mantle shrouded, truly thou
The heaven's great Cæsar seem'st, yet no dread
Is in thy mien, O Sun! Upon *thy* brow
God's wreath of love entwined, ne'er shone so
bright as now!

Spring's Awakening

A TENDER radiance floods the earth again ;
Love, Light and Song the bridal morning greet
Of wakened Nature ; from the sapphire sky
The Spring descends, and with her jewelled hand
Disrobes the mountains of their garb of snow,
Crowning once more their patriarchal heads
With gleaming coronals of gold and blue !
Sweet Herald, she, from climes ethereal flown,
Brings gracious promise unto Nature's ear
Of her long-promis'd spouse, the fulgent Sun,
Whose amorous glancings from her wistful face,
Long while withdrawn, or waxing cold and few,
Have left her jealous-sickened, pale, and sad !

SPRING'S AWAKENING

In wood and glen and far-extending grove,
Where Robber Boreas' sacrilegious ire
Hath rifled left the floral altars fair,
The priestly trees assume their vestments green,
And, flinging soft their incense to the skies,
In prayerful whisperings render thanks to God !
Again I hear from greening vales upborne,
Where lie their silver lines across the meads,
Like harp-strings trembling to the touch of love,
The limpid streams their songs of joy renew,
As if to lull the infant flowers to sleep
That ope their eyes upon their emerald banks !
The wingèd world again is all astir,
From where, like diamond sparks, among the
grass,
The gilded insects wind their sinuous course,
To where on poplars tall the ebon rooks
Their homes prepare for the expected brood.

SPRING'S AWAKENING

Above my head the fleecy-breasted clouds
Pour down their fresh'ning tear-drops of delight
Upon the tyrant Winter's new-made grave,
Whose boisterous winds in his inclement reign
Had frequent rent their vapour-woven skirts
And chased them o'er the azure vault in fear !
Now bright-commingling, like embodied dreams
Of hopeful youthtide, like those dreams they
melt

To let the ripening sunshine kiss the earth !
Blent with the sound of many-voiced delight,
I hear the gentle cooings of the doves,
Whose restless flight around their painted cot
The happy wood-embosom'd hamlet marks,
Where homely Simplesness and ruddy Health,
Unknown to care, in calm content abide !
Now soars the lark into the aerial heights,
And whilst his joyful song his heart unloads,

SPRING'S AWAKENING

The wandering zephyrs pause upon their way,
Flap their light wings and hold their perfumed
breath

As amorous of its shrilly-liquid sound !

O soul of soul-uplifting harmony !

What raptures sweet ! what transports ! what
delights,

New-born, make the mind their nursery

And toys and baubles of our gravest cares !

In Memoriam

AN ACTRESS

ONLY a Player—an humble Player,
But strew her grave with the fairest flowers ;
Small victory's this for Death, the slayer,
For likeliest 'tis an angel's prayer
Hath called her home to those happy bowers
Where joy's bright rose has no thorn of care !

Only a player, whose speech is spoken,
Whose face shall never be seen again,
A string in the harp of Pleasure broken—
A shatter'd link in the social chain,
Whose memory treasur'd, shall aye be token
Of hours, full many, she loosed from Pain !

IN MEMORIAM

Only a player ?—Nay more and higher—
An upright walker thro' thorny ways,
 Beneath whose footstep the low desire
 Was ever stamped, as a rising fire,
And if this wins not the earth's best praise,
 Thank God it bringeth the true life nigher !

A Fragment

FOR us who are silently moulding our purpose,
Whose tools are not idle words, but deeds,
Let us bear in mind how, to bend and warp us,
The fool stands by with his hollow creeds.
He jingles his bells for our admiration,—
“An echo,” he cries, “of the spheral song”;
But let us beware of his protestation
Nor add one more to the thoughtless throng!

Pro Aris et Focis

A REPLY TO MR. CLEMENT SCOTT'S STRICTURES
ON THE MORALITY OF THE STAGE.

You men and women—you
To the Muse's heart endear'd,
Who, when souls are sad and sear'd,
Can the soul's lost joy renew ;
Oh ! you at whose word of power
Or laughter or tears arise,
A foe from the Land of Lies
Lays siege to your honour's tower !

But yet tho' Truth, in tears,
Laments o'er her shatter'd throne,
The echoings of her groan
Are the loudest sounds she hears ;

PRO ARIS ET FOCIS

Your voice is mute in the land
That rings with the censor's blame ;—
Is it nothing to you—the fame
That's smirched by the vandal's hand ?

Is it true you are fallen so low,
That the Jove who rules your fate,
In testing your virtue's weight,
Pronounces it lacking so ?

Amongst you are maid and wife,
Amongst you are sire and son ;—
Let them answer, everyone,
For a dearer thing than life !

It is true we're but human clay,
And, perhaps, in the stage's light,
The Tempter's baleful might
Hath a surer, deadlier sway ;

PRO ARIS ET FOCIS

But wherefore the censor's pen ?
And wherefore the purist's moan ?
Is your sin so overgrown ?
Pray answer, women and men !

"'Tis a slander foul and base,
'Tis a mean malignant lie."
And we fling it back, with this cry,
In the mean traducer's face.
For our sins, whate'er they be,
We've the sinner's poor excuse,
And he, too, may need its use
Who hath earned a Judas' fee !

Sighs in Solitude

I AM here by the rolling sea,
I am gazing upon its waves
As they bound, like the hearts of the free,
Round their barless ocean caves !
I can rid my heart of pain
As I welcome its smile or frown,
Yet I sigh for the glow and the thrill, again,
And the bustle of London Town !

In the swarming city streets
There is little to woo me back ;
No share have I in the mean deceits
That lurk in Ambition's track.

SIGHS IN SOLITUDE

But tho' Hope has ceased to reign,
And I seek no vain renown,
Yet I sigh for the glow and the thrill, again,
And the bustle of London Town.

There is joy in the dancing spray,
There is life in the laughing breeze,
When the glow of the heart grows grey
In the arms of chill Disease !
But with Health's resumed reign
Comes this longing they cannot drown,
And I sigh for the glow and the thrill, again,
And the bustle of London Town !

At times, like a sword or spear,
The soul of a man will rust,
And for want of its needed atmosphere
Its sheen will turn to dust.

SIGHS IN SOLITUDE

There's a feeling of life-in-vain,
And it pulls my spirit down,
And I sigh for the glow and the thrill, again,
And the bustle of London Town !

Far removed from the City's strife,
In the bosom of slumbrous ease—
'Tis a cankering death-in-life
Where Endeavour's hot veins freeze ;
It hath charms for the love-sick swain,
It is bliss to the village clown,
But I sigh for the glow and the thrill again,
And the bustle of London Town !

Regret

**AH ! how vainly do we let the mind
Wander back in dreamy retrospection—
Back to scenes of pain, long left behind,
Where lie fabrics, razed, of Hope's erection!!
Better far look forward to the years
Flowing on with unperturbèd motion ;—
Pearls, unseen but thro' despairing tears,
Sparkle yet in Time's unfathom'd ocean !**

A Magic Thought

OH ! am I sad or joyful—bow'd with care
Or high-upborne on hope's cloud-cleaving
wing,

One thought there is that ever seeks to share
The weal or woe the passing moments bring,
One thought that aye sets all my veins aglow :—
Nel cor della mia Rosa sempre viverò !

Sweet as the first faint sounds of wakening morn,
When Sleep has coyly mocked the suit of Pain,
Sweet as the murmuring brook or hunter's horn
To him whose limbs have worn the captive's
chain ;
Sweet as the winds that romp where violets
blow :—

Nel cor della mia Rosa sempre viverò !

A MAGIC THOUGHT

At break of morn and in the busy day,
At eve and in the pulseless hush of night,
It soothes my soul like some celestial lay
Or tale the woodland's leafy tongues recite ;
To it my brightest gleams of hope I owe :—
Nel cor della mia Rosa sempre viverò !

With this sweet thought to nestle in my brain—
With such a bird to cheer that dreary cell,
Whate'er my fate, the world shall still retain
A charm will make it bliss therein to dwell,
My heaven shall be the one it makes below :—
Nel cor della mia Rosa sempre viverò !

The Frost King and the Moon

THE Frost King sighed his love to the Moon

When the weary world was sleeping :
"More fair art thou than the glow of noon
When song-birds sing in the ear of June,
And flowers from the grass are peeping ;
And might I but win thee for my bride,
I'd robe the earth in a garb of pride,
That a fairy's robe would seem poor beside !"

The shy Moon looked on the slumbering world,

With a look that was half of pity,
For Pain was there, though his flag was furl'd,
And Rest would soon from her throne be hurl'd,

THE FROST KING AND THE MOON

And Care would sack the city,
And fair seemed the vow the Frost King sighed
To robe the earth in a garb of pride—
“The dear old earth that I love,” she cried !

“I dare not hope to lighten those ills
That prey upon spirits human,
But beauty ever its balm instils,—
It may be the beauty of streams or hills,
Or the softer charms of woman !
And so my spouse shall he be—this king,
And, if nought else from our union spring,
Of man’s lot this beauty shall dull the sting.”

The brother Powers of the Frost King heard
Of the Frost King’s declaration,
And each kind fraternal heart being stirr’d,
They sought not to hinder by act or word

THE FROST KING AND THE MOON

Such a project's consummation.

And the Frost King and the Moon were wed
Ere the golden hour from the skies had fled,
And forthwith hied to their bridal bed !

And the chill winds came, and all thro' the night,
With a rare Arachnean power,
They wove in silence this garment white ;
How lovely it looked in the silver light
As it hung upon lake and bower !
And the Moon looked out from the Frost King's
arms

At the sleeping town and the peaceful farms
In their new array of immaculate charms !

And where, like the leaves of a holy book,
The hospital roofs were gleaming,

THE FROST KING AND THE MOON

She saw a child thro' the window look,
While Pain and Pallor their haunts forsook
At her 'raptured fancy's dreaming.
And with voice as sweet as the mavis' strain,
She cried, "*Now who will say it is vain,
The beauty that so can temper pain !*"

Sanctuary

To thy fond breast, like a bird to its nest

When the night's down-stealing,

How sweet to flee, in my pain, to thee,

For thy hope and healing !

Thine eyes meek light can put to flight

The foes of my quiet,

As suffering flies when a martyr dies

At faith's calm fiat !

Athwart my brain, as the sun o'er the main,

Thy soft voice flingeth

A peace and calm, like the soul of a psalm

Which a seraph singeth ;

SANCTUARY

And the touch on my brow of thy hand, and lo !
Like love's dawn tender,
The firmament teems with the rapture of dreams
And the earth's all splendour !

Yet this joy, too soon, like the wintry moon
To the cloud's clasp flying,
In the past's dark track, in a shroud as black,
Shall be starkly lying,
And memory's waves, as they wash the graves
Of my late-slain blisses,
Shall deepen their moan to a dirge-like groan
O'er the spot where this is !

And yet if this gloom is the end—the doom
Of all I have cherish'd,
Shall I blindly grope on the spot for hope
Where my peace has perish'd ?

SANCTUARY

No ! if not in flight, for my soul's sad plight,
I may win some solace,
Then adieu to aid till, at long length, paid
Old Charon's toll is !

For swift and strong life's road along,
Troop circumstances,
By whose chill breath congealed in death
My heart's romance is !
Yet no grim fears their message bears
For unborn morrows,
Their direst sting is this—*that they bring*
This parting's sorrows !

To a Faithful Friend

AND art thou dying—dying ?
Is the throbbing life and glowing
From thy great heart outgoing,
Thou living tabernacle of my love ?
Thy worth was far all human things above ;
Yet must I look upon thee,
And, with tears and sighing,
And fond but futile trying
To baulk the ruthless hour,
Whose pitiless endeavour
Seeks to dissever
Our souls for evermore ?
For evermore ! It cannot be ;

TO A FAITHFUL FRIEND

From death's fell severance
Of soul and sense
Men's love can yield them no immunity;
But ours, meseems, is too intense
To yield to its decree,
E'en as two linkèd notes of melody,
Thus have we ever been,
And I within the sheen
Of thy great yearning eyes
Have warmed my numbèd heart,
And killed the smart
Of life's unnumbered miseries,
When nought else yielded ease.
And now those eyes in death are glazing;—
Despite Love's all
Their light shall soon be gone,
Their trusty vigil done,
And thy quick ears be deaf unto my call!

TO A FAITHFUL FRIEND

But yesterday you followed at my heels
And thrill'd at my caress,
And shared my meals,
And show'd thy joy's excess
In bark and leap
And antics numberless ;
And now death comes to reap !
This feeble whine—
This low sad moan,
And now this gasp of thine !
(My heart beats fast)
'Tis come at last !
I weep—
My truest, best-loved friend is gone to sleep !

Pain or Pleasure?

Is the vision pain or pleasure,
When man sees in woman's eyes
Light that far exceeds the measure
Of the fairest noonday skies,
And which poets deem a prize
Far outshining Mammon's treasure?

When the downtrod and the lowly
Seek for aid, yet seek in vain,
When the poet's spirit solely
Sounds the deep well of their pain,
Tho' his song slay wrong unholy
Lives it in his pleasure's gain?

When the flowers around him springing
Seem the bodied visions rare

PAIN OR PLEASURE?

Of those souls who, never singing,
Never gave them verse-dress fair,
Is't to him not pain's worst stinging
When to crush them men will dare?

When in Vice's dark substrata
Gem-like souls are wall'd in gloom,
When this great World-Book's errata
Seem best figured by their doom;
When he looks on their stigmata
In his bosom bower or tomb?

Think it o'er, ye pale explorers
In the haunted mines of thought,
Think it o'er, ye rapt adorers
Of the image ye have wrought—
Ye who long such truths have sought
Trancèd beauty's apt restorers!

A Phantom Sound!

OVER the ivory keys I bent,
In a sad and pensive mood,
And back to the hours my mem'ry went,
When my heart's first love was wooed ;
I never knew if I woke a tone
From those slumbering keys below,
But a sound stole forth, like a sad sweet moan,
From the lips of the long ago !
That sound brought back a night in Spain,
In the glow of the pale moonshine,
And my dead love stood by my side again,
And mingled her voice with mine ;
The olive brow and the burning eyes
Bent o'er me where I lay,
And again I owned the treasur'd prize
I lost on a fatal day !

A PHANTOM SOUND !

I felt the touch of her burning cheek
And her fingers through my hair,
I heard, like a dagger of sound, the shriek
That frightened the midnight air !
I bend again o'er a prostrate form,
And pause for one tell-tale breath,
But the tightening lips are no longer warm,
And I stand in the gloom of death !

And tho', to-day, by my eerie skill,
I can charm the soul so well,
Those ivory keys are like teeth that fill
The gaping jaws of hell !
For ever the ghost of the Past draws near,
When I seek them in my pain,
And that phantom sound falls on my ear
And brings back that night in Spain !

Nobleness

FLOWN from this earth art thou ; but whither
flown ?

To what bright orb in the star-sprinkled space
Hast thou retired ? Time was when thou didst
place

Thy crown upon Man's brow and, from thy
throne,

Stooped low to lift the slave near to thine own
Exalted sphere : then Sorrow and Disgrace
Read their redemption in thy radiant face,
And dried their tear-drops and repressed their
moan ;

But now !—We see thee now but in our dreams,
Thy shrine has mouldered and thy worship ceased,
And life is like a day from which the Sun
Removes the golden pageant of his beams ;
Thy temple now, alas ! boasts not one priest—
Thy name's forgotten, and thy rites are done !

Death

THOU Grizzly Janitor of that awful gate
At whose dread porch e'en Valour halts in fear,
Thou whose dark shade o'er all our pageants here
Is flung in mockery of our pride and state ;—
Eternal subject of man's thought sedate,
To whom the dread unknown alike is clear
As the deep mystery of each whirling sphere
That, with glad song, makes Cœlus' heart elate :
Say what the secret is that thou dost hide ?
Has Speculation craned its neck in vain,
And Faith and Doubt with Hope made holiday ?
Does each presumptuous surmise fall not wide
Of that which is ? Alas ! thou wilt not say—
Thy secret ever sealed must sealèd still remain !

Sunset

DAY hath his task forsa'en, but, in the West,
The colours yet upon his palette glow
Like shiver'd atoms of the aerial bow,
Or jewels hung on Clytie's dewy breast !
The mighty artist hath his need of rest,
And gentle Evening stealing, on tip-toe,
Into his languor-laden studio,
Prepares it for the coming of his guest,
The ever-welcome velvet-sandall'd Night !
A little hour and she will come and draw
The curtains of his bed, and, with her kiss,
Make starry dreams for him, and full of bliss,
Such as the first bright pair in Eden saw
Ere Sin, in envy, banish'd their delight !

Kilkee*

WHAT awful grandeur meets my ravish'd eyes !
What scenes of wondrous beauty here abound !
Each charm that communes with my wild surprise
Seems to proclaim this beauty's chosen ground—
The home of bliss—of grief the burial mound !
For who that museth here but feels his breast
O'ermastered by the sense that floats around ;—
An atmosphere of love and peace and rest
Wherein the spirit soars to rapture's loftiest crest !

Unequall'd thou when calm and sunshine blend
To smoothe the furrows of thy rugged brow,

* Kilkee is a small village on the West Coast of Ireland
and in the County of Clare.

KILKEE

And oh ! how fair when evening shades descend
And Western skies with sunset splendours glow,
Like heaven's own aisles disclosed to us below !
But when the clouds with darkling passion
 swell,
And fierce tornadoes o'er thy bosom blow,
What are those charms which in thine aspect
 dwell,
That bind our souls to thee as by enchantment's
 spell ?

Gigantic billows, in your angry might,
Like some colossal monsters fury-sway'd,
I gaze on you, with that amazed affright
In slumber felt, when some dark shape's survey'd.
In all your dread magnificence array'd,
What mind can contemplate or eye behold,
Nor feel his thoughts arise to Him who made

KILKEE

Your watery sinews ; by whose nod controll'd,
You lower your humbled crests and flow on calm
and cold !

Like mighty moving mountains capped with snow,
Onward they rush with soul-appalling roar,
Lashing the cliffs two hundred feet below,
As some wild beast might lash its prison door,
To gain the freedom of the plains once more ;
Flinging their spray in the tumultuous sky,
They challenge heaven to combat o'er and o'er,
Then raise their plumèd summits yet more
high,
To scan those huge walls' strength that dare their
wrath defy !

Anon a calm succeeds—the pearly clouds
Proud Phoebus' chariot wheels roll swift between,

KILKEE

Which, from his pathway spurn'd like white
dust-shrouds,

No more obstruct his all-enlightening sheen
That, like a golden deluge, floods the scene !
The gem-crowned wavelets gently kiss the strand
Where, thick-bestrewn, the tempest's spoil has
been

Scattered by its strong infuriate hand
Which crumbles in its palm the mightiest piles
on land !

And here this sovereign architect, the Sea,
His quaint fantastic workmanship displays ;
Stupendous cliffs rise up majestically,
Grotesquely hewn in various forms and ways,—
Monuments sublime ! which frown contempt on
praise !

Cyclopean visages, in profile bold,

KILKEE

Fix on the waves their petrifying gaze,
Whilst fancy pictures those grim giants of old
Come from their caverned fires to catch the
breezes cold!

Long grimy corridors and halls are here,
And vaulted aisles, in solemn gloom enroll'd,
With dismal cells, where, in retirement drear,
Erstwhile, mayhap, his beads the hermit told ;—
Terrace and colonnade and portal bold,
And grottoes, elfin-formed and garnished fair,
With rich festoonings of the seaweed's fold,
And curious plants and glittering sea-shells rare,
And altars fairer far than man e'er raised for
prayer !

Where quaked the cliffs before their mad career,
And, severing, let the assaulting wave-hosts thro',
Bridges unique, with bristling arch and pier,

KILKEE

Their sculptured glories thrust upon the view !
Where are the masterpieces art can shew
To vie with thine, thou wonder-working Sea ?
Hath Phidias' hand, which could with life endue
The senseless marble, left us aught to be
To these proud proofs compared of thy skill's
mastery ?

Up from the deep, like mighty branchless trees,
And towering proudly o'er its loftiest wave,
As proud souls tower above their enemies
And stand, whilst hate and envy round them rave
Their impotent malice, dignified and brave,—
Pinnacles of granite lift their stately height,
As if therewith old Neptune deck'd the grave
Of some grand souls from whom his fierce delight
Hath reft the life we guard with such abased
affright !

KILKEE

Beneath me, circling its deep seats of stone,
What do I gaze on ? Not the work of man !
Hast thou, O Rome ! in barbarous ages flown,
From this fair model ta'en the wondrous plan
Of thy prodigious structure ? Say who can.
But thou superb arena—Love's retreat !—
No slaughter streams around thee ever ran,
The cheers which hailed the gladiator's feat
With thee were songs of joy or whispered vows
more sweet !

And here a glassy pool arrests the eye,
So calm and motionless, so deep yet clear,
We hush our footstep's sound instinctively,
As tho' we deemed it sacrilege to bear
A ruder tone therein, or had some fear
Of rousing from her rest some nymph divine,

KILKEE

Who scarce should shock us could she now
appear,

For to such haunts will instinct still assign
Those ideal habitants of the mysterious brine !

Clad as thou be'st in that weird oerie dress
Which Legend's hand has over Nature flung,
In vain my Muse thy matchless loveliness
I doubt has pictured ; there is many a tongue
Than mine more gifted, yet I find unsung
The charms which here my weakly skill pour-
trays ;

Then I, the feeblest Erin's bards among,
Unpluck'd the first green leaflet of my bays.
Thy pardon for my verse is all I ask for praise !

A Gloomy Reverie

My heart is sad ; beneath affliction's stroke
My bruised patience reels—my brain grows sick ;
Athwart my blinded spirit, like the smoke
O'er a war-wasted city, hangs a thick
Impenetrable veil :—the failing wick
Of reason's light, that erstwhile shone so bright,
Is hastening to its death of darkness quick,—
But wherefore fear the coming of the night—
Shall I not then from pain obtain a sweet respite ?

My heart is sad ! my joys are vanish'd all !
Yet would I not for these waste one regret,
Could I but step beyond the dungeon-wall
Of my imprison'd power—could I but set
My sail again for Hope's bright shores and whet

A GLOOMY REVERIE

My blunted soul in its enchanted bowers;—
But no! it may not be, alas! and yet
This fruitless longing dogs my life's best hours,
And ev'ry wholesome thought with dire infection
dowers!

My heart is sad, and thro' the leaden sky
That shrouds my way with funereal gloom
No ray of sunshine streams to glad mine eye,
But all is cold and sombre as the tomb!
Is this of all life's better aims the doom—
To be thus wreck'd as by some witch's charm?
If so, then welcome still the cannon's boom,
The clashing steel, or ought that may disarm
Life of its vengeful power to work me further
harm!

My heart is sad! my brilliant dreams have fled!
Cold is the tide that courses thro' my veins,

A GLOOMY REVERIE

Yet I'm not old nor grey, nor bent my head,
But bowed to earth by dread invisible chains.
And for my ills the weary world contains
No salve, alas, my wounded soul may share ;—
For all its hollow joys—its fame, its gains—
I would nor strife, nor toil, nor danger dare,
But, reckless of my lot, laugh even at despair !

But hold ! I feel a change come o'er my soul ;—
My mind expands, and as I look away
With high prophetic vision near the goal
Of my life's pilgrimage, I catch the ray
Of one sweet star whose lustre rivals day,
And to my mind reveals a wild expanse
O'er which my weary wandering feet must stray,
Ere I can bask within its lustrous glance.
O Heaven, endue my heart with courage to
advance !

Eureka

I WOULD that the currents of song
Were not frozen in my soul,
For my heart is full of a thought
That sighs for a seraph's speech ;
And I envy all sweet-voiced things,
From the willow that whispers its dole,
To the ocean that finds a tongue
In each pebble that strews the beach !

For after long years of search
And sighing that knew no end,
I met in the desert of life
A rare and beautiful thing ;

EUREKA

And forthwith I gave it a name—
I called it a "*Faithful Friend*,"
And felt that its love was much more
Than is symbolled by nuptial ring!

And ever, and ever again,
I murmur that beautiful name,—
For the currents of song are dried,
Dried up by the frosts of grief,
And the rhythmic balm that was mine
Is no longer mine to claim,
And to crown thee with that word
Is my full heart's sole relief!

Darkness

THE light is out, and I am in the dark,
The day has fled, and I am lost in night !
For she is gone who made the darkness bright,
And all my glowing joy is cold and stark !

The winds outside sigh like a troubled ghost,
And I am watching thro' the window pane
For her who ne'er, alas ! will come again :
Ah me ! what torture is a loved thing lost !

Lost—can it be ! But yesterday her eyes
Looked down, like summer stars, into my own,
And now the sea-tossed corpse is not more
lone—

For I am weeping o'er love's sundered ties !

DARKNESS

Like to the dawn that scares a troubled dream,
She broke upon my weary, watchful life,
And she to me was sister—mother—wife,
But now she's vanished like a Spring-sun's gleam.

Shall I again look in her eyes? God knows!
The future's working is beyond our guess,
And nought as certain can we name—unless
It be the fell recurrence of past woes!

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